

Local Bridge Improvement Assistance (Local Bridge Program)

Statute: Local Bridge Program: [§84.18](#) **Admin. Rule:** TRANS 213

Program objective:

The objective of the Local Bridge Program is to rehabilitate and replace, on a cost-shared basis, the most seriously deficient existing local bridges on Wisconsin's local highway and road systems. Local units of government are responsible, by Administrative Rule Trans. (213), for the maintenance and inspection of local bridges.

Program eligibility:

Projects must meet federal and state requirements. Counties, cities, villages and towns are eligible for rehabilitation funding on bridges with sufficiency rating less than 80, and replacement funding on bridges with sufficiency rating less than 50. Each county is responsible for reviewing and prioritizing bridge projects within that county, subject to meeting eligibility standards for the program. Bridges are rated based on a federal bridge rating methodology, which is designed to measure the relative adequacy of a bridge in terms of structural and safety aspects, serviceability and functional obsolescence, and suitability for public use.

Locals submit information to Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), which calculates the sufficiency rating. Seriously deteriorated local bridges (those with a rating of less than 50) are included on a list of bridges to be replaced. Local bridges with a rating of 80 or less are eligible for rehabilitation. Local units are then notified which bridges are on the list. The decision on whether or not to actually replace a bridge rests in the hands of the local unit of government. Both federal and state funds for local bridges are allocated by formula to each county, based on its proportional share of bridge replacement costs. Counties then select which projects will be constructed each year. Federal and state funds cover 80% of specific individual project costs. They are matched by 20% local funds.

Program definition:

WisDOT has two local bridge programs: a statewide local bridge entitlement program and a high-cost local bridge program. High cost bridges are defined as those costing more than \$5 million and exceeding 475 feet in length. (SS 84.11)

Program description:

Each county is responsible for reviewing and prioritizing bridge projects within that county, subject to meeting eligibility standards for the program. Bridges are rated based on a federal bridge rating methodology, which is designed to measure the relative adequacy of a bridge in terms of structural and safety aspects, serviceability and functional obsolescence, and suitability for public use. This method uses a scale of 0-100. Since CY 2000 WisDOT considers a bridge to be seriously deficient if it has a sufficiency rating of less than 50 (TRANS 213).

Program history:

A federal program for local bridge replacements was initiated in 1979, which included a requirement that all non-state maintained bridges be inspected once every two years. WisDOT then developed a planning inventory and needs assessment, which resulted in a program to replace approximately 150 bridges per year, a goal that has been attained ever since. State funds for the local bridge entitlement program were first approved in the 1981-83 biennial budget. The Local High Cost Bridge Program was created in the 1989-91 biennial budget.

Application cycle:

WisDOT District Offices solicit Local Bridge projects in spring of the odd numbered years, with the approval in the summer of the odd numbered years. Beginning in 1997, a three-year program was developed for 1999-2000-2001. The 2003-2005 program is in effect and WisDOT District Offices are currently soliciting projects for the 2005-2007 program cycle.

Annual Amounts Appropriated: \$34,760,000 (\$26,290,000 federal/\$8,470,000 state)

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